1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ii

The office of Mandal is hereditary, within the Lepcha meaning of the term; that is to say that the title resides in the extended family, and when the holder dies or becomes feeble through old age, it is given to the next most suitable male in the family; it often is the holder's eldest son, but may equally well be a younger brother or nephew of the holder. The position is probably older than the Tibetan colonisation of Sikkim, for some of the Mandals of Zongu are the eleventh or twelth of the family line to hold the position. In Lingthem Chala Mandal, the present holder of the title, is the third of his line to hold office; he has been Mandal for twenty years, succeeding his father's younger brother Tasso Nungyen, who in his turn had succeeded his own eldest brother Ogen. Before Ogen the office had been in old Serving's family; but Serving's father Pépo was exceedingly stupid and the only other suitable member of the family was already a lama attached to Talung monastery; therefore the title was taken from his line (the Tsel-telim *ptso*) and transferred to Chala Mandal's (Jam-yong *ptso*). The Tsel-telim *ptso* was originally by far the most powerful in the neighbourhood, but is now almost extinct, owing, it is said, to the *tamtoom* resulting from one ancestor who sold Lepchas as slaves to the Bhutanese.

The Mandal is normally spoken of as the 'landlord' of the village, and the other householders are called his 'tenants.' The Mandal holds the land under the Maharajah, who is the ultimate owner; the householders have the usufruct of the land but cannot transfer it outside their family without the Mandal's consent; for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village the permission of the Court is also necessary. The Mandal is responsible to the Court for the maintenance of good order in the village and for the collection of taxes; if there is a deficit he is liable to have to make it up. In relation to the other villagers he stands in the position of an elder relative—father or uncle or elder brother; he arranges the marriages of most of the young people, he looks after everybody's welfare and happiness, giving advice on personal or agricultural matters where they appear needed, and acting as intermediary between the villagers and the Court. It is necessary for the Mandal to be slightly richer than his 'tenants'; he has to entertain all distinguished visitors; he has to look after the orphaned and homeless (Chala Mandal had permanently living in

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

512 to visit a girl with whom he has made an appointment, to return home before dawn; but most people sleep heavily after the day's work.

527 Nine days out of ten this represents the normal Lepcha life, for
[461] the Lepchas are extremely hard-working and industrious; though they do not work fast they work steadily and for very long hours. But the monotony of working life is continually broken up by feasts and ceremonies; there are the regular bi-monthly monastery feasts, and in most months there are one or more calendrical lamaist festivals; people are born, or marry, or die, or fall ill, and these are all occasions for feasts for the friends and neighbours of the
● [574] people affected. There is also a continual current of visits; married women return to their native village, taking with them their children or some relative of their husband's; young men go to visit their *asék*'d bride, accompanied by a friend or relation to help carry the gift; trading partners come on a visit or are visited. All these visits are also occasions for feasts, not so elaborate as the big ceremonial feasts, but a pleasant interruption of everyday routine. The occurrence of feasts varies somewhat with the calendar; they are most frequent in the autumn after the harvests have been gathered and the cardamum sold, and least common in the early summer before the harvest is ripe, when supplies may be running short.

The most regular of all are the bi-monthly monastery feasts, and since, owing to the fact that I was living in the monastery, I was inevitably in the centre of them, it is these gatherings which represent for me the typical Lepcha crowd. At an ordinary feast about eighty or ninety people will be present; occasionally the feast-givers are poor or unpopular and then there are only thirty or forty; and once, when Tafoor was responsible for a bumper feast, there were well over a hundred. About a dozen lamas are seated in the prayer room; six or seven nuns and a considerable number of other women and old men and young children are crowded together on the floor of the small prayer-drum room, the *lha-gong*. Inside the porch, on the right-hand side, is seated the Mandal; next to him is probably Gongyop, as these two are great friends, and the givers of the feast if they are laymen, and strangers and visitors to the village. Outside are probably two cooking places; one to the front of the
[262] monastery is fairly small and on it is probably cooking the vegetable 'curry' (*bi*) which is served as a relish to the staple cereal. On the east side there are probably two or three big pots cooking, one

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 777 this is done the husband and wife must each carry away their own image and throw it into the forest. The cost of this service is either Rs. 3 a head or enough grain for two months. This ceremony, however, only postpones the ill-luck for two or three years, after which it must be repeated.

585 As can be seen, these spaced visits are carefully arranged to make the bride's severance from her family as gentle as possible. It is only very exceptionally, as in the case of Nariya described above, that after the marriage ceremony the bride will refuse to return to her husband's house. It is also worth noting that until well after the ceremony the parents of the children being married play no rôle whatsoever.

The marriage feast represents very considerable expense—if everything had to be bought somewhere between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300; for most people this entails saving up for a couple of years. Nearly everybody who can provides this feast; in the case of very poor people general contributions will be made such as were outlined in Chapter Six.[7] In the case of a *komok myok*—that is a man living with his wife's family and taking the place of the non-existent son—the feast is very much smaller and is chiefly provided by the girl's family.

iv

602 592 The newly married girl is likely to find herself in a somewhat subservient position; it is her task to do the cooking and most of the household chores under the direction of the 'house mother', who is almost always her mother-in-law. She also has to maintain constantly respectful behaviour towards her father-in-law and the other men—her husband's elder brothers and her husband's father's brothers if they live in the house—who are so classified. If her husband is not the youngest brother she will only have this subservient position until the younger brothers marry; then their wives in their turn will occupy the position of youngest daughter-in-law and have to do the greater part of the household work. There is usually considerable friendliness between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; the daughter-in-law is taking a lot of work off her mother-in-law's shoulders and in return the mother-in-law instructs her and cajoles her to keep her happy.

574 There is no bar on the girl paying relatively frequent visits to her parents; she need not necessarily be accompanied by her

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 156.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

husband, but can take as companion any other member of her husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

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eighty people, including men, women and children, would be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, and on some occasions would continue the party well into the following day. There would generally be some visitors from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop-keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but I only learned this later) the people were merely away working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the village soon realised that we really were harmless. Thereafter we were able to arrange for a regular stream of informants and someone or other usually came each morning to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 2

Himalayan Hotch-potch: an Anthology of Sikkim

The country.

"SIKKIM—Native State in the Eastern Himalayas, with an area of 2,818 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by Tibet; on the south-east by Bhutan; and on the south by Darjeeling District; and on the west by Nepal. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is pronounced Denjong, and more rarely Demjong or Demoshong; and the people are called *Rong-pa*, or 'dwellers in the valleys,' the term *Mom-pa*, or 'dwellers in the low country,' being used occasionally to describe the Lepcha inhabitants."

Gazetteer of India, Vol. 22. 1908.

The climate.

"The climate varies between the tropical heat of the valleys and the Alpine cold of the snowy ranges. The rainfall is very heavy, averaging 137 inches annually at Gangtok. From November to February the rainfall is light, and the weather in November and December is clear and fine. In March thunderstorms commence and, growing more and more frequent, usher in the rainy season, which lasts till October."

Ibid.

Encouragement for the timid traveller.

"Even in the most remote regions of Sikkim one's personal safety is assured, for the inhabitants are a peaceful and hospitable folk, and on this point even the most nervous need have no fear. Ladies travelling by themselves may undertake expeditions to the furthermost bungalows, without being subjected to the least inconvenience, their *sirdar* or headman always regarding their protection as his own personal charge.

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"I begin with my personal servant Changzhi, whom I have had for twenty-five years. His father was the first servant we engaged on first coming to Kalimpong. In almost every characteristic he was an older edition of the son. He was with us until his death in 1912, when the son, then at the plough, succeeded him. The first characteristic of Changzhi is his honesty and truthfulness. In all these years I have never known him tell a lie to me or take anything that was not his own. I have never kept anything locked up from him, nor in matters of money kept an account of what I have entrusted to him: he did that. He would never take anything for himself without being told by me to do so, and I have known him disobey me in this in cases when he thought it was for my interest to keep something a little longer. I have, of course, known Lepcha servants who could not have been treated in this way; but I believe that Europeans in our district trust the Lepchas generally. If they fail, I believe that it is not infrequently through taking alcoholic liquors. On the other hand, I have known Nepalese domestics who have been quite trustworthy. The failures have been more numerous than among the Lepchas, and here again drink has been still more frequently the cause. Among the young Nepali men in the towns, it is pathetic how many who had promising futures have been ruined through drink.

"Another characteristic of the Lepchas is their generous and charitable nature: Changzhi shares this to the full. The fact that they lived an isolated life among the forests of the Himalayas before the Nepalese invaded their sanctuary made them interdependent. They were not good farmers and their agricultural implements were primitive. Their dependence upon forest roots and fruits, which were got free by the labour of their hands, encouraged the gospel of sharing; and they share everything. Shortly after we came to India we tried by our 'Young Men's Society' to develop an interest in social questions. One night the subject was debt and the cause of it among the Lepchas. One man said that in his opinion it arose through their stomachs: 'In the

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241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to

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boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, consulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system prevailing each village has, according to the size of its population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry School. These boys are usually away from home between, roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite comfortably after the first few months and are probably better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and write a little. The system has much to commend it, and enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

[p. 222 is blank]

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of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marrying additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

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789 stop it altogether. Unfortunately, it is not possible to get the Mandal, for instance, to make the request on behalf of another in order to ensure success; and there appears to be no means by which one can tell whether one's mind is in accord with that of the Lama or not; one must take the risk and hope for the best.

791 Tafoor's usual fee is twelve pounds of *chi* millet for stopping rain for a period of three days, whatever the result; but if successful it is usual to give him a further eighty pounds of grain when the crops which were sown during the period in which he kept the rain away are harvested. Should he exercise his powers on behalf of the whole village no payment is made in kind, but the others will work his fields for him: this is equivalent to about two days' work from each person concerned.

789 After setting out his altar with lamps, incense, and so on he must look at the sky very intensely and attempt to drive any clouds away by the power of his thoughts; he must continue to do this as each fresh cloud appears. He must start to do this at dawn; and even if no clouds appear he should concentrate on keeping them away at four p.m., nine p.m., and at one the following morning. It is not possible to compromise by stopping the rain only during the daylight hours; it can only be stopped altogether or not at all. While Tafoor is concentrating he must not talk to anyone and should remain quiet and thoughtful; but once he has set the machinery in motion, so to speak, there is no objection to carrying on with his ordinary occupations, but he must not go out and work in the fields.

* * * * *

● 574 431 I was all packed up and ready to start by seven, but it took some time to take leave of the village, which turned up in force to see me off. Nearly everyone brought a parting present, as a result of which I left Lingtem with enough chickens to start a poultry farm, and sufficient milk to bathe in. I was greatly touched by the people's kindness, but their

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

presents could not possibly have arrived at a less inconvenient moment. We eventually left at about ten o'clock, in pouring rain, and to the accompaniment of the monastery band, which went with us for about a quarter of a mile. Tafoor told me not to worry about the weather: he has set everything out and it will certainly be fine to-morrow.

We reached Lungdeum in a couple of hours, after which the path degenerated into the very roughest of tracks through the forest, climbing up and down a great deal. In a number of places the hillsides were too steep for an ordinary path, and here and there narrow lengths of sliced bamboo had been fastened across the cliff face. These are easily negotiable in dry weather by anyone walking barefoot; but a real death-trap when wet to anyone wearing nailed boots, as a false step is liable to precipitate one at least twenty or thirty feet down the hillside, and may even have more serious consequences. The Lepchas laughed at my extremely clumsy efforts to retain my balance. Rubber-soled shoes are the best type of footgear for this sort of work; but in wet weather they merely add to one's difficulties. For anyone who is unaccustomed to walk barefoot it would probably be best to wear a couple of pairs of thick socks or stockings and discard one's boots; they do at least give a good grip on the slippery bamboo planks.

By four o'clock we had dropped down to the river, which had to be crossed before the final climb up to the camping site at the entrance to the narrow valley that leads up to the monastery. Most of the coolies, who had left Lingtem a long time before me, were waiting on the other side, perhaps in order to have a good laugh at me crossing the bridge. I must confess that I find these Lepcha bridges most terrifying. They are made of heavy strands of cane, joined together and anchored to huge trees on either side of the river. The two main strands also serve as a handrail, and from them smaller canes are suspended at intervals so as to form a series of U-shaped loops. Into these loops long lengths of sliced bamboo are placed end to end. These form the actual

537

En Ye!	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Mo-tan-chi Roń kup kun non bān	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
So-lā-non po-bong yit duk kań as	And the *ar-tasm* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tasm po-nig duk kań as po-s'or boń	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yit duk kang as Roń kup yam yoń s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

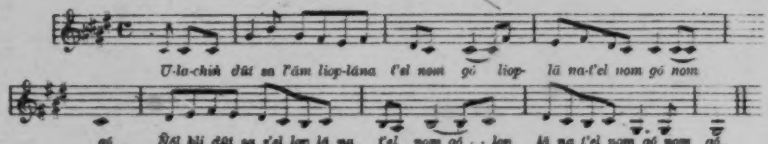
[574] [273]

III.

U-LA-DUŃ DŪT.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]


U-la-chiń dāt sa l'ām liop-lāna l'el nom gó liop- lā na-l'el nom gó nom
gó Ńol bli dāt sa s'el lop lā na l'el nom gó - - lop lā na l'el nom gó nom gó.

U-la duń dāt sa-l'ām liop-lā na-l'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ńol-bli dāt sa-s'el , , , ,	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Soń la lyen s'u fak-ruń , , , ,	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ka-fer lo-run nań nāń liop-lā diń mil nom gó.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'er la tań-kat sa-s'el , , , , ,	Like a bright golden tassel.
Mil tań-gum diń-mil nom , , , , ,	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'ot ta-bli-la liop-lā na-f'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-mok fo s'ot nań nāń , , , ,	Like a sorrowing *S'uń* bird.
Sāk la ma run na mo , , , ,	Like a loudly lamenting Takmok bird.
Loń la ma run na mo , , , ,	I feel very sad!

IV.

THE PANGS OF LOVE.

Chin-cho-ne tak-nak buk go ma f'ān na-gań	Though I tasted not the wild *chin-cho-ne* yam [7])
Kyok-rōa-lo lat dok S-tim-bu klī nom-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyok-rōa-lo* heart.

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[824] [231] [415]

[1]) *Po-cher* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo from which pitchers are made is „*Po*" or „*Poo*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, NEES & ARNOT). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine coracana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poli-f'ut*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poli-bis*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *bis*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ńol-bli*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *Lun-s'u*.

[7]) *Tak-nak-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour.

[222]

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VII.

S'ik-bā-li uṅ-koṅ [1] *el-bo re to gó s'en,*
Mit tak-gum na-lem [2]
Ki-ruṅ [3] *pā-tā uṅ-koṅ el-bo re to gó s'en*
Gi-yoṅ-tsok fa-lak nam gó mi ya [4]

O! who changed the course of the Singbali [1] river?
It was the powerful fairy, the sister [2] who is behind?
O! who changed the course of the Kirungpata river?
It was a powerful like me a *gi-yoṅ-tsok* young brother!

The reference to the rupee and the occurrence of several Tibetan words in the following, shows its modern character; though it may be founded on an older version.

VIII.

Kar-co kap c'am-bu gya-lam-bi [5] *tyat só na lé*
Din-tam-pāṅ kom kat bo yat sāṅ yoṅ s'ē
S'ik mā-yi [6] *p'i-liṅ a-t'oṅ ñak sa gīt-lā yo*
Sāk la na-run-ne loṅ la na-run-ne. [7]

Oh come with me, a little *kar-co* boy to the cross-roads
And I will give thee a *ding-tam-pii* [8] rupee
Though I have taken refreshing *Shing-mai* foreign (snuff
My heart is swelled with grief.

IX.

INHOSPITALITY.

539 574 563

Yuṅ-mo tam-ceṅ kāp ñāṅ bā
A-som tup na-só na-mé
Hao-dó tsik-ceṅ ok ñāṅ bā
Ñat- [10] *tyat a-som tup so s'o.*

When a Yangmo's door is shut
One cannot find foot to eat
But when his door is wide open
One gets food to fully satisfy.

This may be paraphrased as follows: "Even when a Yungmo's door is open wide there is nothing to eat though plenty inside". It refers to the notorious inhospitality of the Yungmo and other half-breed Lepchas who have intermarried with the Limbu tribe and so treat the pure Lepchas disdainfully. Other such mixed groups of Limbus and Lepchas are the *Mang-mū-mo* (in the Kulhait valley), *Lak-som-mo* in the Rathony valley, and the *Ling-dam-mo* and *Sak-mi-mo*, all of whom are proverbially inhospitable. Finally I wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from Mr. D. MACDONALD in getting the Lepcha manuscript of several of the songs, and for help in interpreting several points.

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[1] *Uṅ-koṅ* is a 'branch rivulet'. [2] Or *na-lim*.
[3] Or *Ñi-ruṅ*. [4] Or *yuṅ*.
[5] Name of a river in Sikhim to the South of Darjeeling which through a landslip cut out a new course for itself.
[6] *Mit* is usually applied to a water-fairy. The phrase attached to this word means literally 'true understanding', but is said to mean 'behind'.
[7] This word is Tibetan. [8] Or *S'am-ma-ō*. [9] Or *Mar-yoṅ-ne*.
[10] The *tam* of this phrase may either be the descriptive „flat thing", or it may be the Indian *tanka*, the rupee, as coins are not indigenous. [436]
[11] Or *Kat*.

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576 **ETIQUETTE--greetings and salutations; obeisances; compliments; concept of courtesy; general patterns of etiquette in eating, drinking, smoking, visiting, and travel; deference to status superiors; noblesse oblige; breaches of etiquette and the resulting social sanctions; etc. See also:**

Drinking etiquette 27
Patterned behavior toward kinsmen 60
Sexual etiquette 83
Table manners 264
Postures 516
Polite conversation 531
Sportsmanship 536
Chivalry 642
Intentional impoliteness 578
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Court etiquette 644
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Training of children in etiquette 867
Treatment of the aged 888

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Maharajah's father, doing menial out-door work. He was subsequently transferred to the service of the present Maharajah's maternal uncle and accompanied him to Lhassa where he spent three years in his service. At the end of that period his master was killed fighting against the Chinese, and in the same year the then reigning Maharajah died. Tempa returned to Gangtok and resumed service with the reigning Maharajah. Part of his service consisted in carrying letters and offerings to Talung monastery and bringing things back from thence. On his way to and from Talung he used to stop at Lingthem, in the house of Pumri, his present mother-in-law. Pumri and her husband had no surviving sons but only daughters, one of whom Tempa married; as is permissive in such cases Tempa did not take his wife home, but stayed in her house as *komok myok*, or resident son-in-law; thereby he became the heir of his wife's parents.

In character Tempa combines obsequiousness with domineering. Alone among the Lepchas of Lingthem he adopted a special voice, low and wheedling, when speaking to us Europeans; he despised us and thought we could be fooled by flattery, he tried to exploit us and to exploit others through our presence. If we went to the house of a third party when Tempa was present, he would assume all the rights and duties of host, elbowing the real host out of the way; he would offer the host's presents as if he were the giver, would fuss about and scold as if he had been appointed to look after our comfort, and would hand us over stones and ladders as if we were blind and infirm. He used to salaam and put his hands to his head whenever he met us, an action which has no place in Lepcha life; for very important personages Lepchas will unbraid their hair, but bowings and prostrations are uniquely reserved for the images of the lamaist gods. Tempa had a monomania about orphans, or else he thought it was a point to touch European compassion; nearly everybody he referred to, no matter what their age, was tearfully described as having no father and no mother; all other dead relations were also always named. Like Kurma, Tempa was always inclined to show himself as more influential than he was in fact, and insist that people had done certain things or followed certain courses at his advice or through his intervention. These claims were not always true.

When he was appointed Muktair the authority that he gained made him overweening and boastful and he used to threaten everybody who annoyed him, even, it is said, animals and inanimate

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mention the names of his parents or parents-in-law; a man should never mention the name of those women he calls daughter-in-law (that is the wives of his sons, of his younger brothers, and of his brother's sons), nor a woman the names of those men she calls 'son-in-law' (that is her daughter's husbands, her younger sisters' husbands, and the husbands of her sisters' daughters). These prohibitions hold good even after a person is dead; but here likewise there is no avoidance of the same or similar-sounding words in ordinary conversation. To call a person by name, rather than by their title or a kinship term is considered to be somewhat ill-mannered; it has the same effect as though one were treating him as a child or inferior. In Europe a parallel situation is created when a stranger is immediately addressed by his or her Christian name; it is classing that person as a child or a servant.

It is difficult to gauge the emotional weight which is carried by terms primarily employed in the immediate family when they are applied to more distant connections. My impression is that the use of such terms as 'mother' and 'father' does carry, and is intended to carry, some of the emotional attitudes derived from the original application of the terms. No child who was able to talk had any doubt as to who were his real father and mother, but many would say 'I have two mothers; my real mother is little mother.'

Among the Lepchas the crucial situation arises when a young man lives in the same house as the wife of his father's younger brother. If these two lived in different houses the woman would be a potential spouse for the boy; he would call her *azong* and would have the right to sleep with her. But if they live in the same house he will call her 'mother' and, on account of the emotions of respect and incest surrounding the term, is meant to respect her. In Lingthem there were five or six young men in this situation, and I was not, in any of the cases, able to decide to my own satisfaction whether they did or did not sleep with their 'little mothers'. In the presence of other people they would always deny doing so, for they would be ashamed to say otherwise; three or four confessed privately to having done so, but all on later occasions tried to withdraw or modify their statement, saying for example that though they had slept together they had not done anything. Third parties would never speculate on such private behaviour; to direct questions they would reply with the catch-phrase 'Who can read what is in the heart of another?' Such behaviour, though

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787 Kurma foretold my headache with the following dream: he saw me walking along the riverbank with his mother-in-law, came to salute me, and I gave him a silver rupee. Later in the day I asked him to repeat the dream which he did as follows:—'The Sahib[2] dressed in his usual clothes went to the valley with my mother-in-law. I was coming from the forest along the river and I saluted the Sahib with joined hands[3] whereupon he presented me with a silver rupee. I then said to my mother-in-law "The sahib has come to see us: what can we set before him as a present?" My mother-in-law replied "The sahib has come to walk and to fish in the river; we have nothing suitable for him—no chickens, no eggs. What can we give?" After that I woke up.'

The interpretation of the dream was fulfilled; to dream that you are given silver means that you will get a good drink of *chi*, and this was fulfilled when Kurma called on the Mandal earlier in the day to discuss village affairs with him. The mother-in-law in my company showed that I was the victim of a female devil Langteun *a-nyou* who brings head-ache and eye-ache and thirst. Any ugly or dirty or badly-dressed woman represents this devil; the fact that it was his mother-in-law was without significance.(!) Had the head-ache persisted I should have hired a Mun to drive the devil away with offerings of *chi* and incense.

776 779 The demonology and, to a lesser extent, the hagiology of lamaism and the Mun religion are unified by a system of cross-identification in the two mythologies. Devils, and to a lesser extent gods, in one mythology are equated with differently-named supernaturals with similar attributes in the other. It thus happens that supernaturals have nearly all two names at least; but for Lepchas, as has been said, names are impermanent and without significance and no discomfort is felt from this. Some extraordinary tangles result from these identifications: the most popular lamaist god, called alterna-

I put these remarks down to courtesy. In fact, however, I was taken ill within a week of leaving Lingthem and had to go into hospital almost immediately on returning home. I did not recollect Tafoor's repeated prophecies till some months later, when going over my notes.

[95] [2] The polite Lepcha term for a European is *Sé-pano*, which I believe to be a corruption of Sahib. *Pano* means a king, but the first syllable is apparently meaningless. The less polite word is *mik-dum*—white eyes. Europeans or fair people in dreams are good-omened, dirty people ill-omened.

[576] [3] The two hands cupped together and held in front of the breast is a respectful attitude and gifts must always be received with joined hands, to indicate that the gift, whatever its nature, is overpoweringly large.

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the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

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the ceremonial objects and women usually have a good wash at least once a month; grown men on the other hand wash exceedingly seldom. But even though they are so dirty they are in comparison with the Tibetans relatively clean; it is true that they have a much more clement climate and an abundance of water, so that there is no external reason for their being as dirty as they are.

vii

The chief attention that a full-grown Lepcha pays to his person is the care of his hair. Until about puberty children of both sexes have their hair cut short, and lamas always have their heads shaved or close-cropped; but the hair of a woman or layman must never be cut after *aśék*. Indeed were a woman after betrothal to cut her hair it would be *nam-toak* and would produce the death of a member of her family. Men wear their hair in a single long plait hanging down their back, often with a thread ending in a tassel braided into it; women nearly always have their hair in two plaits, taken from either side of the nape of the neck; sometimes these two plaits are bound separately round the head; others wear them with the two ends joined together with a piece of braid. Men nearly always have longer hair than women; many men had plaits reaching down to the waist; the women's hair rarely fell below their shoulders. Men with long pigtails often twist them round their heads when working, as the swinging queue gets in the way. In the presence of a superior men and women always let their hair hang down as a mark of respect; and the first act of a nun on coming to worship at the monastery is to remove her head-cloth and let her hair fall on her shoulders.

Once a week if possible the hair is unplaited, if necessary deloused, washed, oiled, and then replaited. With the exception of a spouse and the parent-in-law of the opposite sex anybody may perform this service for anybody else; even adult brothers and sisters may dress each other's hair. Hair-dressing is considered an impersonal and unintimate act; at feasts and large gatherings there is often a long line of people seated with each arranging the hair of the person in front of him.

Long and lustrous hair is one of the points of beauty for members of both sexes; other points which are considered desirable are a straight nose, a flat face, a fair rosy complexion, a round head and a straight body without prominent curves. Big eyes, small eyes,

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features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhutanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely sixty miles in breadth.

"An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Gurkhas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhutanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel (this statement is altogether unfair to the latter and in no way true). A group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet; rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists. The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed, oblique-eyed, with no beard, and a little moustache. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. . . . Indolence, when left to themselves, is their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are supportable out of doors. . . . In disposition they are amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unconstrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They

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793 834 conformed to the Tibetan rule. But she only laughed, and would not tell me the reason. When I got to know her well she told me: "Once a woman's head is shaved," she said, "it is no longer permissible to sleep with a man."

302 576 793 Lepcha women usually wear their hair in a divided plait, which they coil in a circle round the head. It is a mark of respect to wear the hair down loose, and for this reason the plaits are uncoiled when Inebus come to the monastery. The same rule applies to men, who will likewise undo their queues as a mark of great respect. I seldom saw anyone do this at the monastery, but was told that a man would wear his hair loose in the presence of the Maharaja, for instance, if he wished to show the utmost respect.

793 The wife of a Lama does not necessarily become an Inebu. It is entirely a matter of personal desire: nor is it necessary to start as a child. Many women do not make the decision until well after marriage. It is said that a certain amount of instruction is given; but in view of their duties, which could well be performed by a blind deaf-mute, I do not think this can amount to much. They do, of course, commit a few prayers to memory, and it is said that their training takes from ten to fifteen years. Since they are still illiterate at the end of it, this I can well believe. Datoop's wife, who is easily the most intelligent of the local Inebus, told me that the selected teacher will usually be a Lama, but may, if desired, be some other woman. The pupil visits her teacher generally twice a day and works in the fields in between. If the teacher lives far away she will go only once a day, or even once a week, in which case the teacher will give her homework to prepare. It is not quite clear, nor was my informant able to explain, how this was done by a person who could neither read nor write. Sometimes a Lama will teach his own wife, and such Lingtem Inebus as are the wives of Lamas have all been instructed by their own husbands. Inebus have the same ranks as Lamas, but their duties do not vary, nor does there appear to be any arrangement or ceremony by which a woman may be advanced in rank.

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in Lepcha society through intermarriage with Nepalis. [756]

Before leaving the subjects of illness and sorcery it will be convenient to describe the Lepcha Lama in his function as healer. I have already noted that this is his principal employment, but he also takes part, of course, in the services of general worship held at the monastery from time to time. In Tibet the two functions are not generally combined: a Lama is either a sorcerer or a priest, but never both. There is of course a close connection between the two and they often work in conjunction. In Sikkim, however, this differentiation is not recognised, at least not amongst the Lingtem Lamas, and the two distinct and really quite separate functions are here combined.

During our stay in Lingtem we had frequent opportunities of seeing Tafoor at work. It would be of no interest to give the details of every ceremony we attended, for except in minor details they did not greatly differ. I propose, therefore, to describe only one such occasion; and since it is a fair sample of them all, to tell the story in some detail.

I have already mentioned that Pichi, the son of Datoop, had spent some years in Gangtok learning to be a carpenter. He finished his course and had returned to Lingtem in March. He looked thoroughly ill; anæmic and emaciated, he appeared to be wasting away. He was unable either to eat or work, and could only drag himself about with difficulty. Datoop brought him one day to see us, when he complained of pain in the heart and side. He asked if we could give him medicine, but there was nothing we could do beyond recommending him to go into Gangtok for treatment. This was shortly after our arrival; and since there were at the time many new things to see and do we thought no more about him.

Pichi, however, got steadily worse, when his father then called in Tafoor. Datoop is himself a Lama, but it would have been a breach of professional etiquette for him to prescribe for any member of his own household. [576]

We went to the house about half-past five and found that an

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585 This story is always told at Lepcha weddings, at the time the animal sacrifice is made, and explains why a copper pot, pig, and other articles always form part of the marriage gifts. It was told me by the Mandal, who learnt it from his father when he was a young man. It is known to all Muns, but not by many "ordinary" people.

584 [576] When it is wished to arrange a marriage the parents of the boy concerned must first send for a *Pi-bo*, or go-between, as it is not etiquette to conduct the preliminaries in person. The meaning of this word is literally "a nicely-spoken person," which, in view of the use made of elegant periphrases during the course of the actual marriage ceremonies, well describes the duties of the office. The *Pi-bo* may be any suitable experienced man; but in actual practice, in Lingtem, it is nearly always the Mandal.

584 431 The parents now prepare a special ceremonial gift known as *Khachyong*, which consists of eight pounds of fermented chi-millet, one rupee, and a Tibetan ceremonial scarf. If the last is not available six annas in cash may be sent in its place.

584 The *Khachyong* is taken by the boy's *Pi-bo* to the house of some near relative of the selected girl, usually to a brother of one or other of her parents; but in no circumstances may it be presented to the girl's parents direct. Having arrived at the village the *Pi-bo* ascertains from the girl's relative who will act as her go-between, after which the two men visit him and hand over the *Khachyong*. In return for this present the girl's *Pi-bo* promises to see what he can do in the matter, and the boy's representative then returns to his own home. All this, of course, is a mere formality, since in most cases it has been previously ascertained, perhaps years before, that the proposed marriage is acceptable to all concerned.

The girl's *Pi-bo* keeps the chi-millet for himself, but takes the rupee and the scarf to the girl's parents and discusses the proposed marriage with them. It is the custom for them at first to refuse, giving as excuse that the boy is too poor, or not of good enough family. The *Pi-bo* continues to plead with them, and if unsuccessful in gaining their consent he returns

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796 The party moved off again at about ten a.m., carried out another bout of reading at a house on the way, and eventually reached the Mandal's, where the night was spent, at about three in the afternoon. By this time most of the party were completely "under the weather," so to speak, and could barely walk, so that the last part of the procession was carried out in a somewhat disorganised fashion.

The following morning it moved off to the neighbouring village of Panung, which is really all part of Lingtem, whence it returned direct to the monastery, which was reached at about half-past two. In the meantime I walked a couple of miles along the road with Geoffrey, who was leaving for home, meeting the returning procession on the way. It was a little the worse for wear, but was otherwise moving along quite nicely. As it re-entered the monastery all
● [576] the women who had not accompanied it formed up in two long lines, with their hair let down as a mark of respect. As
[788] the book-carriers entered the garden the women crowded round and pressed their foreheads against each book in turn, and some ordered their children to do likewise; there was no display of emotion. Some of the women were carrying offerings of grain and lamps on trays, and one had a plate of small *tormas*. Most of the village was by this time present, and all now joined the procession, which circled several times round the building. A halt was made at each of the four corners, where a little of the grain was offered to the gods. Finally, the complete gathering went upstairs to my "bedroom" in order to return the books to their shelves.
[788] This was done in ceremonial fashion and to the accompaniment of the complete monastery band: the noise was deafening. While the books were being put away most of the people kept prostrating themselves on the floor. Towards the end of the proceedings the people seemed to get a little bored and the last few volumes were bundled anyhow into the shelves, after which the ceremony just fizzled out and most of the spectators drifted away. But alas, not all, for a number remained behind to prepare the offerings for to-morrow's

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The return of the *Boom Kor* procession. Women with offerings and Lamas pronouncing blessings as the procession returns to the monastery.

[778
779]

Villagers pressing their foreheads against the books as they are carried into the monastery.

[576]

Carrying the books upstairs. Note that all the women have let down their plaits as a sign of respect.

[Facing p.291]